Cyberbullies on Today’s School Campuses

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Cyberbullies and online predators have become a major problem on today’s school campuses. Cyberbullying is a form of harassment and torment that can compromise the safety and privacy of students.

The issue of cyberbullying is one that many school teachers and administrators are currently contending with on their campuses. “According to Hitchcock (2007), a 2004 survey of 1,500 students conducted by i-SAFE, 42 percent of students have been bullied online. Nearly one in five have had it happen more than once.” Students that have been victims of cyberbullying have experienced being threatened, sometimes lied on, and even stalked. An overwhelming number of students, “53 percent admit to having said something mean or hurtful to another person online. More than one in three has done it more than once,” (Hitchcock 2007). It really should come as no surprise that cyberbullies are bold about their behavior. Hitchcock (2007) found, “Just as bullies are proud of how they have control over their victims on the playground, now they can follow their victims everywhere because of the accessibility of the Internet.” Cyberbullying is directly related to technology because bullying is no longer just occurring “on the playground”. Students can now be bullied by anyone from anywhere on earth! Also, thanks to instant messaging, email, MySpace and other social networking sites, students can be bullied at anytime of the day or night. Hitchcock (2007) concludes, “Bullies have gone online, predators are lurking everywhere, and MySpace is a nightmare for kids and teens”.

There are many situations in which students have been victims of cyberbullying. According to Adelman (2004), “. . . middle school students are often targets for sexual harassment and sexual approach.” Students have been sexually harassed by pedophiles, humiliated and insulted by fellow classmates, slandered and even driven to the point of suicide, all at the hands of cyberbullies

The problem of cyberbullying is important to classroom teachers because teachers can be on the lookout for signs of cyberbullying occurring on their campuses, and they should take measures address it and to alert parents. Teachers can help students stay “safe online”, (Hitchcock 2007 p2). Administrators must implement and enforce a no-tolerance policy regarding cyberbullying Teachers should encourage students to tell them if they have experienced cyberbullying. Teachers can advise students to report cyberbullies quietly by way of a message box (housed in the classroom) or by email. Teachers should impress to students that they will help them and provide support. Most of all, teachers, help students understand that they can trust you. Many students that have been victimized by cyberbullying never report it because they are afraid of reprimand or retaliation from the cyberbully. Teachers can attempt to confront the cyberbullies and inform their parents of the situation, or teachers can also refer students that have been victims of cyberbullying to [www.haltabusektd.org](http://www.haltabusektd.org).

According to Hitchcock (2007), “Students tend to post too much information online.” This is the first mistake many students make. They figure only their friends will be privy to their personal information and neglect to realize that the Internet is wide open to anyone and everyone on the face of the earth! This negligence of students only fuels the arsenal of cyberbullies!

Adelman, Hallee, March 2004. Teaching online Safety. *Voices From the Middle*, Volume 11

Number 3.

Hitchcock, J. A., May/June 2007. *Cyberbullies, Online Predators, and What to Do About Them*.